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SUBJECT: JORDANIAN STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST U.S.,

ISRAEL, IRAQ

¶1. (SBU) Police contacts confirm that approximately 400 students at the University of Jordan in Amman held a demonstration on March 22 to mark the one-year anniversary of the death of HAMAS founder Sheikh Yasin. During the rally, which was organized by members of the Islamic Action Front, demonstrators burned the U.S. and Israeli flags. The rally began at approximately 1230 and ended after one and a half hours without incident.

¶2. (SBU) Arabic dailies al-Rai and al-Ghad reported that this is the first demonstration at a Jordanian university in six months. The students called on the Arab League to respond to reports that Israel plans to establish new settlements, and to an alleged plot by Israeli settlers to "storm" the al-Aqsa Mosque. They criticized the burning of the Jordanian flag in Iraq during recent demonstrations there. They also called on university administrators to "raise the ceiling" of freedom of expression and to open dialogue with the students. According to al-Ghad, veiled students wearing "military dress" led the march.

¶3. (SBU) Head of the university's Student Affairs department Bajes al-Slaibi told reporters that the students did not apply for a permit to organize the march, and that the university will "deal with the participants according to bylaws and instructions." However, an RSO contact informs us that gatherings on university campuses are exempted from the Public Assembly Law, which requires a permit before organizing a public event. The source added that if the demonstrators had tried to exit the university premises, they would have been stopped by police.

¶4. (U) Minimize considered.
HENZEL